

Approved 01/24/2006

PRESENT: Committee members Peg Pinkham, Charles Kimball, Don Gates, Joe Delahunty, Mike Miller, Marc Wood, and Kevin Zukas. Minutes were taken by Selectmen's Clerk Jeanne Nygren.

Superintendent's office Barbara Munsey, Superintendent and Martha Williamson, Business Manager. School Board members present were Chris Kenneway, Marjorie Guidoboni and Joseph Dreyer, and Lisa Begley.

The meeting was called to order at 7:15 PM by Peg Pinkham.

After correction of two errors on the January 10, 2006 minutes a motion was made by Delahunty and seconded by Kimball to approve them as corrected. These minutes will be reprinted and placed into book. The vote was unanimously approved.

SAU had given written answers to the first night questions, these answers were dropped to town hall and they were mailed with the minutes of January 10, 2006 to all the Budget Committee Members.

The following are the questions, answers and discussion relating to them.

QUESTION-How many lap top computers? Where did the money come from and how specifically were the computers paid for? What is the dollar amount?

Delahunty how many new computers were bought?

ANSWER-Williamson answered 51 donated and 37 with grants and fund raised money. Laptops can be obtained through federal grant. Districts are notified they are eligible for REAP grant (Rural Education Assistance Program). Budget 2003-2004 actual will give you the amount spent. The money from grants doesn't normally get put into the budget. This is the general fund budget that has four different funds. In this district two are the general fund and food service fund.

Miller said long term plans were to purchase 3 to 5 laptop computers for teachers each year which came out to buying one for every teacher. For the teachers that have laptops what is in budget for this maintenance? Is this included in grants? There were 37 computers purchased with a \$20,000. grant.

Delahunty thought that each teacher having a laptop is a luxury. Should that money have been used to update the computers they already have?

Munsey explained that grants are used for curriculum improvements (meaning for teachers). The staff 3 year plan developed for curriculum is making it necessary for teachers to have laptops. Also, for database management of student's data they need to have laptop. Teachers are also expected to integrate technology in classroom. They take home their lesson planning.

How do other schools accomplish this without computers Delahunty asked? Response was not very well.

Munsey also stated that you can't share computers that the students have because of security reasons. Epping school system has a period every day for teachers to do their curriculum and they also get paid during the summer to do their curriculum. When our teachers take these laptops home they are not getting paid for this.

Miller asked would there be a problem with developing of curriculum outside of the contract. Would they be expecting to get paid at some point when doing this at home? Superintendent answered no.

Miller asked haven't hours been negotiated under their contract and is it signed? Munsey thinks so.

Lisa Begley stated her lap top is compatible mostly with other teacher's one. School programs are sometimes not compatible and a lot of data input can be lost. Teacher wants creativity for their students for their daily lesson plans. Laptop would make her life easier. It is an invaluable tool having their laptop for use at home. The superintendent also stated that personal computers may bring a virus into the school system. It has happened. There is no personal use of school computers by teachers.

Peg stated that our teachers know what their jobs are and take this very seriously, if they take on extra hours on their own it is part of what is expected in their job. Munsey added that during the regular school day, lesson plan and curriculum cannot be done on a daily basis. Gates asked if they want to be compensated.

Munsey went on to say that there is extensive curriculum overview done during summer months that needs prior approval before it can be accepted. Teachers are expected to keep their curriculum up as part of their job. Getting a stipend for this would never be approved. Also paraprofessionals don't have laptops.

QUESTION: Who is considered as professional staff?

ANSWER-page 2, professional staff is regular education teachers, special education teachers and support teachers. These support teachers include guidance, speech therapy, technology director, etc.

QUESTION: World culture program. There is some information on page 4 with a breakdown.

ANSWER: World language position replaced with world cultures teacher. Regarding issues and students, parents wanted to understand the offerings of language. There is a shortage of language teachers in the district. Munsey said this introduces difference cultures to the students.

Parents and teachers also felt more of a need for health and a teacher was put into this place. Grade 8 world cultures class was added.

QUESTION: Why are there two retirement plans?

ANSWER: Everyone in the school district pays FICA. This is not an option.

Williamson said that in the early 60's there was a choice whether to have both. The individual pays 7.5% and the community pays 7.5%.

Gates asked how we missed this for the police and fire departments.

QUESTION: Why is computer software listed in so many categories?

ANSWER: Munsey stated that the computer technician hasn't finished the inventory listing for the committee she is about half way done. This information is forthcoming. We always buy licenses rather than individual boxes. Open Office 2.0 replacement for Microsoft Office is being tested. This is a clone of Word and Excel. Woods is leery on using an open office in the schools. You can give each student a copy of it and is compatible for them free of charge.

QUESTION: Breakdown of the number of students per classroom?

ANSWER: Found on page 6.

QUESTION: Breakdown of cost per student?

ANSWER-Found on page 7.

Miller asked in the cost per student what is included? Munsey said that State has a strange calculating formula that includes tuition, capital, transport, facilities, and food service. We used the same format in this budget.

QUESTION: Is there any other district around similar to our district when comparing teacher's salaries?

ANSWER: The most valuable comparison is competition in the area, compared Epping, Raymond and Exeter. Kenneway offered information from Standard & Poor chart that looks for the number of students and then compare demographics and income. Fremont is at 7.8%. Annual income in Fremont median is \$74,000. for the whole Epping income is \$50,000. Our teachers in Fremont are paid less than many other regions listed. Many of Fremont's teachers are at the top of the scale and they still don't make state average.

QUESTION: What is the difference in private tuition vs. public tuition?

ANSWER: On page 9-Munsey said that when tracking tuition to public academies and private and other schools it also requires them to tract residential costs. This is dictated by NH Dept of Education. They need to determine how much is going out of the district and to whom.

QUESTION: Clarification of home-to-school coordinator position?

ANSWER: Page 10. Munsey stated that there is a job description attached. The salary and benefits are paid through IDEA by this position truancy issues, behavior and performance level programs can be addressed early to save resources and the students are better themselves. This is a yearly grant applied for annually. All positions grant funded are contingent on federal funding being received.

Miller asked if home to school coordinator is a required position. Munsey replied, no. New program IDEA is money to be used for this. If this grant wasn't provided then they could decide whether to continue or not to continue this position, or ask voter to approve this position in the budget.

QUESTION: Tutor line item explanation.

ANSWER: There are two school tutors, one elementary student and one middle school students. These tutors paid on an hourly basis and as needed basis. They are used for students not making adequate yearly progress. The school is being proactive for tutoring needs of students. The student's individual test grades 2 through 8 Northwest Evaluation Association data are being reviewed. These test reading, language, math for both strengths and deficiencies.

Miller asked if tutoring is offered and the student refuses has the school fulfilled its obligation? Munsey answered, yes. If students don't stay and take advantage the teacher doesn't receive any pay.

Delahunty asked are you anticipating a jump in budget? Munsey said there are two ways to do this. Either address the deficiencies now or wait to be mandated to do it. We did not offer tutoring services in the past. Northwest tests all children to know exactly where they are in regards to NH standards. They are now in the process of pilot test. This test will be run again in the spring. This shows how the student is performing and at what grade level and this information given to the next year's teacher. This information will help identify what the needs are and what needs to be worked on. It is cheaper to do this now rather doing it when mandated. The Northwest test results come out right away and students like taking this test better.

Munsey said it is impossible to predict special education. We still need 60,000. The special education budget is based on present needs. If anything out of the ordinary occurs then school committee would come to budget committee as the procedure to follow.

QUESTION: Psychology salary, why is there an increase of \$13,436.

ANSWER: This increase is due to testing and evaluations. Munsey said that test materials have jump from 200 to 1500 and that testing materials have to be upgraded to the next model. Usually every 2 years this has to be replaced. We will find out what they are buying and if the computer software license of \$500.00 is correct.

QUESTION: Speech page 47 line 2150 what is \$700. increase in only one teacher?

ANSWER: This teacher because he is at the top of their pay scale and gets a stipend instead.

QUESTION: Improvement of instruction.

ANSWER: This \$9000 is the contractual agreement for all teachers. Our teachers are active in educational development. By investing in teachers will yield better instruction and cost the in special education will go down also. If there is any money not spent is returned to the fund balance. The hours of development by each teacher is monitored by the staff development coordinator.

QUESTION: Media. The decrease in computer tech salary and contract service went up.

ANSWER: She found she could get same services for less by contracting out. This was a savings. First year doing this makes it hard to budget for the following year.

QUESTION: Transportation. Various questions regarding this topic from amount of buses to maybe redoing an analysis for Fremont on having its own buses.

ANSWER: Because of upkeep, costs, benefits, schedules, maintenance, inspections and housing having these buses contracted out seems to be more cost effective.

Gates responded with transportation is for a profit. Pinkham though that maybe we should probably look at this again. Monsey said that if a bus breaks down in Fremont they have access to other buses; liability is huge and just getting drivers for Fremont. The repairs can be expensive. You would need a warrant to buy these buses. Williamson while living in Maine stated that because they need to be monitored at all times and because of this the program didn't work for them.

QUESTION: Page 80-Transportation-Why the dollar report over the past 4 years was 0 and has increased to \$15,000?

ANSWER: Munsey said that this was more used for preschool program. Extracurricular program was interegrated and extended this year for this program. Educational field trips were added. Extra curricular transport went to curricular transport.

QUESTION: What has been spent for this line this year so far? Munsey will get this figure. Pinkham this is maybe something to look at. Delahunty can you put a cost analysis together for this committee for next year? In the past parents helped with school trips and they also had fund raisers. This policy has been limited to two fund raisers and if beyond that had to go to school board for approval because too much fund raising was done. Kennaway not a lot of school field trips are being done, eg. going to beach at the end of year. Parents pay for their own child's transportation.

Pinkham asked do we need administration to come back? Kimball responded no. You can just e-mail answers back.

Miller wanted to know if the impact fees are they taken out of the town. A letter was written to request these fees with a vote by school board to take it all.

Delahunty asked about the sign out in front of Ellis School building, Williamson said part was budgeted in original building fund and we will get building aid of 30% back through building aids from the state. Can we get breakdown and where it came from? Delahunty presented questions as to why? Significant money was saved with putting the addition project and roofing project together.

Pinkham asked again if maybe receiving information on a quarterly basis might be more helpful for the Budget Committee. Munsey said quarterly update might help. Budget has gotten big and we want to support what is going on and there are always changes being made.

The decision of February 14, 2006 as the date for the Final Public Hearing Session for School District petitions.

The Superintendent and School Committee members were thanked by the Budget Committee and left the meeting at 9:45 PM.

Next week the town clerk wants to meet with the Budget Committee regarding her budget and an 8:30 PM time frame was allotted.

A motion was made by Wood to adjourn the meeting at 9:45 PM and seconded by Delahunty. All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeanne Nygren